

1901

67

LIPPINCOTT'S

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY

Lincoln. h. 200.

COMPLETE NOVEL

A Novel Complication

BY E. S. VAN ZILE



LINCOLN
AS AN ANTAGONIST



A PENNSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE TALE



TALKS WITH CHINESE
WOMEN



THE TRUE
BARBARA FRIETCHIE



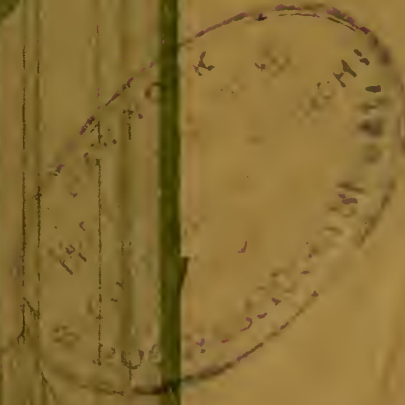
SHORT FICTION



A BLOODLESS VENDETTA
A MULBERRY BEND STORY
BY H. WILTON THOMAS

THE JUNIPER-STREET EPISODE
AN ELECTION STORY
BY ELLIS PARKER BUTLER

MRS. GAYLORD'S CELLAR
PARTY



LONDON
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
15, ABchurch Lane, E.C. 4

J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
15, ABchurch Lane, E.C. 4, LONDON

PARIS
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
15, ABchurch Lane, E.C. 4, LONDON

LINCOLN

AS AN ANTAGONIST

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

By Colonel Charles Pomeroy Button



THERE are a thousand-odd "Lives of Abraham Lincoln," yet the final word of him is far from having been spoken. My excuse for speaking is that I knew him in a way it was given to few to know him,—while he was under the shaping hammer of events apparently trivial, but really of Titanic consequence.

Personally he was my friend; politically, my antagonist. What was much more important, he was the head and front of antagonism to the man whom of all men I served and followed,—my kinsman, Stephen Arnold Douglas. It was as Douglas's confidential mouth-piece I came to know Mr. Lincoln. In 1855, when I was but little past my majority, Judge Douglas summoned me to Illinois. Without vanity, I think I may say he gave to me more nearly his full confidence, the whole inner workings of his mind, than to any other human being. In a way the trust was a necessity,—he was too wise, too shrewd, too able a strategist ever to put on paper important political secrets.

He had established as his personal organ the *Chicago Times* newspaper. His money and that of his friends for years sustained it. Even thus early his doctrine of Squatter Sovereignty had produced within his own party the rumble of coming earthquake. But he was confident the rumbling would die away, and bent every energy towards so shaping State politics as to insure that the Illinois delegates to the next Democratic National Convention should all be his personal friends and henchmen, pledged to act wholly according to the will of their chairman, Colonel William A. Richardson, of Quincy. District and Congressional Conventions were to go through the form of instructing these delegates for Douglas. It was understood, however, that Colonel Richardson, who was to keep in hourly communication with the Judge, would swing the delegation strictly according to his orders—either hold it for him or throw its strength wherever he might direct.

All this was under the cards when I set forth, ostensibly to canvass the State "in the interest of the *Chicago Times*." Really my business

was to go into every doubtful district and find out who were with him in his Squatter Sovereignty promulgation; also whether they had the confidence of the public, or if the leaders of public opinion had been alienated by his latest departure. Incidentally I was to look after local patronage, particularly post-offices. The Pierce Administration, then in power, gave Douglas a free hand in his own State. Civil-Service rules were undreamed of then—besides, it was not so long since William L. Marcy had formulated his famous saying, or rather adaptation of old Roman military law, “To the victor belong the spoils of war.”



Armed with a general letter of introduction and a list of names, I set forth. The names were all marked—with one X for doubtful, two for trustworthy. Before long I found myself in Springfield, then Mr. Lincoln's home. The man I had to see there first was a leading store-keeper, long a resident of the town. When business was out of the way, I asked if he thought it would be in bad taste for me to call upon Mr. Lincoln, who was already recognized as the only man of any party able to dispute Douglas's primacy in the State. “Go, by all means,” said he; “Judge Douglas has no better friends anywhere than both Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln. I am sure the Judge will be glad to have you go—tell the Judge I said so and advised it.” After a minute's pause he added: “The fact is, Douglas knows Lincoln has been badly used in that Senate matter. He was deserted by his own party for Lyman Trumbull, a renegade Democrat, who didn't control half a dozen votes. If only Lincoln had held out,—as I advised him to do, at the direct instance of Judge Douglas,—he would to-day be in the Senate. Douglas likes him, and would much rather have had him, a consistent Old-Line Whig as colleague, than this turn-coat, who was first Whig, then Democrat, then Republican, changing with the political complexion of the State for the sake of holding office. At the election we Democrats were somewhat up a tree. We had nobody upon whom we could unite with any hope of success. Trumbull was a sort of dark horse. If we had dreamed he was to be sprung on us, half a dozen of us would have found it convenient to go out and leave Lincoln a clean majority of members present and voting. Later it was only his peremptory withdrawal that kept us from going over to him in a body. He knows all about it now—I dare say the knowledge hurts, for he is keenly ambitious. But he complains of precious few things; in his own words, ‘There's never any use in crying over spilt milk.’ At present, I know to a certainty, Lincoln has no Presidential aspirations. He does, however, cherish still a hope of the Senate. To be exact, he wants to succeed Judge

Douglas. If the Judge wins this Cincinnati nomination, of course he must resign, and I am morally certain Lincoln will fill the vacancy."

That night I knocked at Mr. Lincoln's door. He himself came to open it, and after a friendly greeting ushered me into the family sitting-room. Mrs. Lincoln was there, reading aloud to her son Robert, then a stout lad of ten or twelve. Mr. Lincoln's first words were, "As a *Times* man, you must know Judge Douglas personally—the paper is said to be his organ." Then with a smile, half quizzical, half kindly, "I read it every morning to find out what tune it plays for the day." In reply I handed him my letter. After a glance at it he said to his wife, who was on the point of leaving the room, "Mary, this is Mr. Button, a relative of Judge Douglas, as well as a newspaper man."

"We are always glad to meet the friends of Judge Douglas," Mrs. Lincoln said, shaking hands most cordially. Then she went out, and after an interval of desultory chat we came to the root of the matter. At this late day, when almost all the actors in those stirring scenes have joined the majority, I feel there is no betrayal of confidence in repeating what was at the time most confidential. For the most part I talked. Mr. Lincoln listened attentively with cordial interest, and answered without hesitation or equivocation the questions put to him. While I cannot vouch for exact words, I can for the substance of what was said. In effect, I asked if he believed what the *Democrat* (Long John Wentworth's paper) was saying,—namely, that in the removal of postmasters then going on his—Mr. Lincoln's—friends were especially selected for the axe? If he did so believe, the charges were untrue. I added that, so far as my knowledge went, all the men removed were Democrats, appointees of Franklin Pierce, recommended to him by Democratic Congressmen, and removed for due cause. No Whig hold-overs had so far been molested. By way of clinching what I had said I showed him a list of postmasters holding over in the State, a list made out by Postmaster-General Campbell. "Judge Douglas," I added, "has cautioned me to make no mistakes in the matter of recommending changes. If you see that I have made such, pray indicate them; they shall at once be rectified."

Mr. Lincoln glanced at the list. "I do not see that you have made any," he said; then jocularly, "Your wing of the party is entitled to a share of the fowl—and I think Douglas is almost certain to get the liver."

This was a sly hit at the rooster, then, as now, the Democratic emblem, which either crowed triumph in the columns of the local press, or appeared, spurs up, cold and stark, when our opponents had snowed us under. As I smiled over the conceit, Mr. Lincoln went on seriously, his eyes thoughtful but full of kindness: "Judge Douglas

is by nature magnanimous. I never have known him to do a mean act—I hardly look for him to begin now. As to my friends, have you thought that I may gain some new ones by this wholesale decapitation? Certainly no old one will accept office under the present Administration. If he does, Douglas may have him and welcome. I see in your list the names of some of my firmest friends. I say to you and to them, that if they prostitute or take advantage of their official position by efforts to injure Judge Douglas, by soliciting subscriptions for Wentworth's paper, or in any other underhand way, their heads ought to come off—and come off quickly. I too would recommend it. As to our allies in this fight, we shall do all we can to co-operate in every way with their efforts to overthrow Douglas and this monumental delusion of his. We shall fight him and his associates in all honorable ways. What we don't propose to do, is to help those who have not helped us get loaves and fishes out of the Democratic basket."

This first Lincoln encounter was by no means the last. I found him in the course of a dozen interviews exactly the same, always kind, always shrewdly humorous, and full of broadly sympathetic human comprehension. My work sent me here and there and brought me many notable acquaintances. One of the most interesting, in view of later developments, was Judge Bryan, of Salem, father of that William Jennings Bryan with whom the American public has of late become reasonably familiar. On my list as one of the faithful, he, of course, received me warmly, forwarded my mission in every way possible, and ended by asking me to his house. There my main impression was that he and his wife were most admirably matched. Mrs. Bryan, it turned out, though a good Democrat and warm partisan of Douglas, was a great admirer of Abraham Lincoln. She had met both men socially—I think had entertained both in her own home—and was eager for news of them, which I was as happy to give. It was while in Salem that I received a letter from Judge Douglas, still one of my most treasured possessions, saying, "I have attended to your recommendations regarding the Postmaster at Salem. Be sure to make no mistakes, as I shall act at once."

●

It is beginning to be accepted that Abraham Lincoln was a master politician. Very much of that mastery he owed to lessons received at the hands of Douglas. Douglas beat him out of a Senatorship when the Republican candidates for Governor had swept the State. It is perhaps worth while to go a little into detail as to how that result was brought about. It was due wholly to foresight and organization—the organization Douglas had perfected for the benefit of his Presi-

dential aspirations. Foiled of the Presidency, he knew every doubtful district of his own bailiwick, and set to work to carry it by help of local strength. Almost everywhere the young men were hot for him—they even organized the Young Democracy, pledged to do or die for him. Perhaps our opponents were not so far wrong in saying the Young Democracy would vote as a unit for a yellow dog that wore Douglas's collar. Still, there were not enough of them. Here is a sample of how their strength was made to avail. In a very close district* there lived a certain Judge Roosevelt—an uncle, I think, of Theodore Roosevelt. He was an Independent with slight Democratic leanings, easily the most popular man in his county, and thought to be quite beyond the seductions of office. Nobody doubted that he could have any office within the gift of his fellow-citizens. Douglas decided that he should be a member of the House of Representatives, and sent me into the district to pull the wires.† It was a pretty bit of political strategy. First, I got the Independents to break the ice with the Judge. Of course, he pooh-poohed them, but the ice was broken just the same. Next, there was some talk of fusion, good government, citizens' ticket, and all that sort of thing. Then, the Young Democrats, fully persuaded that he would take no party's nomination, went at him with a rush—and were amazed to find him their candidate. The thing to do was to pull off their coats and elect him. They did it, and made Douglas's majority on joint ballot eight in place of seven.

Lincoln, looking on, was a most apt pupil. So was Long John Wentworth, of whom I must say, after a life devoted to playing the game of politics, that he came to be the shrewdest, longest-headed, longest-sighted political manager I have ever known. Douglas in playing politics was, like Lincoln, hampered by two things, conscience and statesmanship, which never in the least trouble your campaign manager pure and simple. Lincoln and Douglas were further alike in that each believed devoutly in his own destiny. "Buchanan is old—I am young enough to wait," Douglas said when the Cincinnati convention had dashed his dearest hopes. Before that he had said to me, while reading a life of Napoleon: "If I had not gone into political life, I might have made some figure as a military man. A political campaign should be planned and thought out even more carefully than a battle."

Political strategy was his delight. Once while we were campaigning together in Egypt—the cant name of Southern Illinois—he was seized with the ailment that finally ended his life. Gout of the

* The Senator from that district held over.

† Douglas intended him for Speaker if elected.

stomach is no joke, but somehow he managed to reach the house of his good friend, Dr. Read, of Terre Haute, Indiana. There he lay for days between life and death. It is pleasant to record that the very first letter of inquiry and regret came to him from Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln. It was one of the very few which the Doctor permitted him to see. Books, politics, everything outside, indeed, were for a while forbidden. By and by, when he grew stronger, he said to us one day: "It is incomprehensible that this city always elects Republican officers. Give me a map of it, Doctor. I want to show you the way to win."

The Doctor put him off, but he persisted. Finally he got the map, studied it carefully along with certain statistics of voting, then planned a campaign which, it may be worth while to record, resulted next spring in the election of a Democratic Mayor. As Judge Douglas had predicted, the campaign cost some money. It was not, however, corruptly spent. From the depths of most intimate personal knowledge I can affirm that neither Douglas nor Lincoln ever spent a dollar in elections otherwise than legitimately. More, I do not believe that either of these two great men could have brought himself to accept a purchased success.

●

When the Cincinnati convention had passed into history Judge Douglas said to me, "Charley, I think you had better look in on those fellows at Philadelphia." He knew and I knew, what very few others even dreamed, that Mr. Lincoln aspired to be the Republican nominee for Vice-President. The leaves he had taken out of Douglas's political book had helped him to make sure of his own delegation. To a man they were his personal friends and ready to stand by him to the last ditch. He was himself a delegate. I thought then, and think still, that his choice for a Presidential candidate was some Old-Line Whig. The new-born Republican party was a scarce-welded agglomeration of Free-Soil Men, Barn-Burners, dissatisfied Democrats,—mainly dissatisfied on the issue of slavery,—Old-Line Whigs, and Americans, or Know-Nothings. It was a branch of the Know-Nothings, indeed, which first nominated the Pathfinder, John Charles Fremont, and asked for him Republican endorsement. The nomination swept the country so like wild-fire that the Republicans perforce endorsed it. In all my life I recall nothing like the enthusiasm for Fremont. Mr. Lincoln said, and I agree with him, that had the election come off within a week of the convention, the Wide-Awake campaign would have swept the country, obliterating in the North and West both the old parties.

I am, however, anticipating. Since the Pathfinder's nomination was so much a foregone conclusion, there was naturally a keen interest in the convention as to who should be his running mate. It was then the unwritten law of conventions that in the informal cau-

cussing which precedes the formal one a candidate's name must be mentioned first by somebody outside his own State delegation. The Illinois delegation was uninstructed—Lincoln had seen to that; really, he held it in the hollow of his hand. I was sitting in the gallery just above it, when a delegate whom I did not know, and whose State and name I have never since heard, got up and said in a most apologetic way, as though truly ashamed to name before the convention a man so obscure, that he presented, by request, the name of Abraham Lincoln, adding, "All I know of him is that he is a right-down good fellow and was an Old-Line Whig."

I looked for Mr. Lincoln, but could not see him. Most likely he had gone out before the nominating speeches. I noted, however, great excitement among the Illinois delegates. Norman B. Judd and John M. Palmer seemed especially discomposed. After a whispered conference, one of the Illinois men got up, and in a ringing speech told the convention something about Abraham Lincoln, "An honest man, the idol of Illinois, best loved where best known, and sure of his State."

"Can he fight?" a delegate shouted. Like a flash the answer went back: "Judge for yourself. He is a Kentuckian." The convention rose at the answer and cheered as though it would raise the roof. When voting began, to the amazement of even his friends, Lincoln was second in the poll. Dayton alone led him, and Lincoln at once instructed his supporters to withdraw his name and cast their votes for Dayton. The result is history. Dayton, nominated on the first formal ballot, was soundly beaten, along with the Pathfinder, the next November. Thus it will be seen that Mr. Lincoln had a narrow escape from being laid on the shelf consecrated to unsuccessful Vice-Presidential candidates. I have it on good authority that he said when he saw the election returns: "Well, after all, it is sometimes better to be a living dog than a dead lion."



He had another saying, or rather story, which was often bandied back and forth betwixt him and Judge Douglas. Either, when some darling scheme had gone amiss, was apt to say he "felt like the boy who stubbed his toe and said 'It hurt too bad to laugh over, and he was too nigh a man to cry over it.'"

Before leaving the Philadelphia convention matter I wish to say that I often wondered how the apologetic delegate fared at Mr. Lincoln's hands in his hour of triumph. I think Lincoln spoke truth in saying he had neither friends to reward nor enemies to punish, but, after all, he was very human, keenly sensitive to slights. Judge Douglas said to me once when the talk had fallen on Henry Clay: "How

Lincoln admires and hates that man! Do you know the reason? It is this: Back in the old Whig days Lincoln, who had served his party mightily well in the State and out of it, and who was known as a rising man, went to Kentucky on a visit. While there he called on Clay—and was beautifully snubbed. He has never forgotten it—he never will forget. Yet the snub made not the least difference in his party loyalty. When Clay was running for President Lincoln worked for him as hard as the next man; but he did not try to help him win the nomination—that would have been too much to expect.”

Loss of the stakes for which they had played—Presidential and Vice-Presidential nominations—naturally brought Lincoln and Douglas into keener rivalry than ever. This time the prize was the Senatorship. It is safe to say that had Lincoln won it the course of history and the map of these United States might both have been signally changed. He should certainly have won. Against anybody but Douglas he would certainly have done it. Not only was his party in a clear numerical majority, but Douglas had by this time broken entirely with the Buchanan Administration and had the whole strength of Federal patronage arrayed against him. I do not think it is wholly an elderly man's partiality for his own times which makes me think there were truly giants in those days, and the chiefest of them my own beloved “Little Giant.” Reasonable familiarity with present-day great men warrants my saying that they lose by contrast with the public men of the Fifties. The morale of public life has also almost wholly changed. I fear there is but too much justice in the charge that nowadays morale spells millions.

●

It was far otherwise in the era of the Great Debate, the most momentous speaking duel ever fought upon our continent. It made Lincoln a national figure, a possible President, and bred in Douglas and his friends the supreme self-confidence that in the end disrupted Democracy and set the Civil War forward on the calendar by a full generation. On the face of things the Republicans had a walk-over. They were correspondingly jubilant, but Mr. Lincoln himself did not share their overconfidence. He knew, better than any other man alive, whom he had to fight and what a fight it would be. Still, however fierce the battle, he had no thought of shirking it. He challenged Douglas to go with him to the people, the plain people, present his case to them, and leave them to judge whose case was the better. Douglas accepted the challenge gladly. I think he had a subtle and peculiar pleasure in crossing swords with this political enemy, who was also his close friend. After some preliminary speech-making at partisan gatherings it was agreed that the two should meet at the Tremont House, Chicago, and talk over informally the plan of a joint campaign.

Fate allotted that I should make a third at that informal meeting, the only person present besides the two great principals. I was then a customs inspector in the Chicago Custom-House, and happened to be in Judge Douglas's parlor when Mr. Lincoln and his friends came in. A number of other Democrats were there likewise—in fact, the gathering had somewhat the appearance of a ward caucus; but, as if by common consent, Democrats and Republicans made haste to bow themselves away. I went with the rest, but just outside the door happened to remember a batch of letters Judge Douglas had asked me to post for him, so went back. As Douglas caught sight of me he said, "Charley, please open a window, the smoke here is almost stifling."

While I was lowering it Mr. Lincoln said jocularly, "Judge, do you think it is quite safe—this leaving us alone together?" Douglas laughed and answered, "Perhaps not." Still I hardly knew whether to go or stay. Mr. Lincoln, I think, saw my embarrassment. He handed me a fresh copy of the *Democrat*, asking, "Have you seen what Long John has to say?"

In the ambush of the paper from the room's far end I looked at and listened to a conference truly informal. Douglas set the ball rolling. "I believe, Mr. Lincoln," he said, "it is your idea that we speak jointly in every Congressional district of the State?"

"Yes," said Mr. Lincoln, "that is my idea. I think, Judge, we had better leave details to our friends. I will name one, you one; we leave everything to them, and agree that in case of disagreement they shall choose an umpire; but if the umpire's decision is not satisfactory to both, why, we will meet privately and agree to disagree, though I don't in the least anticipate that there will be disagreement."

"Nor I," said Douglas. "What you propose is entirely satisfactory. As my friend, I name Thomas L. Harris."

"And I Norman B. Judd," said Mr. Lincoln.

It was a queer choice, but a master move on Lincoln's part. Norman B. Judd was the man who of all others had defeated him for the Senate. With a handful of supporters he had caused the dead-lock which eventuated in Lincoln's withdrawal. To be thus chosen placated him and made him Lincoln's firm friend. Let it be said of him further that he was among the sharpest political manipulators of his time. Lincoln's nomination to the Presidency was due to him more than to any other man. Indeed, he was for years one of Lincoln's firmest, most devoted, and least scrupulous adherents.

"Well, that ends the matter. Let's have a drink on it," Judge Douglas said, moving towards the sideboard and setting out two bottles. "I believe you take old Bourbon."

"Not with Ike Cook's Otard, vintage of 1808, before me," Mr. Lincoln said, reaching for the other bottle. A pony each sufficed the

two statesmen; then Judge Douglas lit a Principe and offered one to Mr. Lincoln, which I think that gentleman declined. Puffing at his own, Douglas said, "It seems to me we had as well call back our friends—there is nothing more that needs to be said on this subject."

By way of answer Lincoln merely nodded. With the nod ended all reference to a momentous political event.



THE APPLE-BARREL

BY EDWIN L. SABIN

I T stood in the cellar low and dim,
Where the cobwebs swept and swayed,
Holding the store from bough and limb
At the feet of autumn laid.
And oft, when the days were short and drear
And the north wind shrieked and roared,
We children sought in the corner, here,
And drew on the toothsome hoard.
For thus through the long, long winter-time
It answered our every call
With wine of the summer's golden prime
Sealed by the hand of fall.
The best there was of the earth and air,
Of rain and sun and breeze,
Changed to a pippin sweet and rare
By the art of the faithful trees.
A wonderful barrel was this, had we
Its message but rightly heard,
Filled with the tales of wind and bee,
Of cricket and moth and bird;
Rife with the bliss of the fragrant June
When skies were soft and blue;
Thronged with the dreams of a harvest moon
O'er fields drenched deep with dew.
Oh homely barrel, I'd fain essay
Your marvellous skill again;
Take me back to the past, I pray,
As willingly now as then;—
Back to the tender morns and eves,
The noontides warm and still,
The fleecy clouds and the spangled leaves
Of the orchard over the hill.

